21:Huxley Q, T-5 (no date) 1960 FL11 Luo FL11

towards enclosure—was proclaimed as the official policy and, in 1958, an area called Nyabondo picked out for an experiment. The edict went forth that everyone must define his holdings, mark them out and do, in fact, as the Kikuyu were doing with such success, not to mention the Nandi and Kipsigis and many others.

On the heels of the agricolas with propaganda, local politicians moved in to tell the people it was all a trick to steal their land. Whether or no everyone believed this, no one dared to quarrel openly with the politicians, and not a single land-holder obeyed the Government.

'On 30th December, I called a meeting and closed the whole thing down,' Mr. Peter MacEntee, the D.C., told me. 'All right, I said, if you don't like it you needn't have it; ruin your land if you want to, as much as you like; what do we care? It's your funeral. Go ahead, and good luck to you. The agricolas will leave you alone from now on, the instructors are pulling out to places where people want them; we understand now that this sort of thing *is far* too advanced for you. Keep up the bad work, and good-bye.'

Mr. MacEntee had evidently enjoyed this. In time the Luo, when in their mule-like frame of mind, subdue the greatest enthusiasts. But there was a sequel.

'Three weeks later, half a dozen men from Nyabondo turned up in my office. They had a little plan, with some *shambas* boundaries marked on it. "We have decided to consolidate," they said. "Here are the boundaries of the first *shambas* we've completed. We've marked out each man's fragments and exchanged them as you said. Now we want to lay them out on proper lines. Please send us an instructor and a European."

'This was the first deputation. Others followed. Now the whole of Nyabondo is completed—the first in central Nyanza. We know what to do now. Use the couldn't-care-less technique.'

Another example: on the Kano plains, where rice grows under irrigation, until this year the agricultural department has looked after the bunds. They had endless trouble—arguments, sullen silences, even sabotage. They got the output up to 30,000 bags and there it stuck. Then they withdrew,

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telling the rice-growers they must make and maintain their own bunds. Last season the output jumped to 50,000 bags.

III

We drove to Nyabondo across the Kano plains. No one loves these plains. They are not only flat, they are absolutely treeless, dry, cracked, windswept, overcrowded, dusty and mean. The soil is 'black cotton', an especially viscous clay in which any vehicle bogs down irrevocably in wet weather—very fertile potentially, but soul-destroying to work. 'The people are like their soil,' I was told. 'They break your heart and yet you go on trying, something's there.'

Everywhere are circles of a particular euphorbia, a dark-green, harsh, ugly plant that grows about eight feet tall and surrounds every group of huts. When a family head dies, his homestead is evacuated, his huts are left to rot away and only the euphorbia hedge remains, so the plains are covered with old circles as well as those in use. People have tried planting eucalyptus trees, but white ants eat them before they are man-high.

No individual cultivates his land in one piece. He digs or ploughs a patch here, a patch there, another bit over there, two more bits down the hill and a piece two miles off across the valley that belonged to his mother's uncle. This is known as fragmentation; it is almost universal among Bantu people, exists also among others such as the Luo, and is like a net spread for the feet of Progress in which he becomes enmeshed and stultified.

The first stage of land enclosure must be for every cultivator to exchange fragments with his neighbours, so that all his land is gathered together in one piece. It is the first stage and also the hardest; land is life's blood to the people; it is like exhorting men to exchange their blood, or their children. Suspicions dart out of their holes like bee-eaters. Won't so-and-so, my neighbour, get an unfair share? The bit he wants to swap for my piece is smaller. Give up my fertile patch by the river where bananas flourish for that barren stretch of hillside? Never! Somewhere there is a trick in all this. . . .